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ABSTRACT

Rural development literature yields three images of improved social well-being--economic technical growth, human-interpersonal growth, and environmental-quality protection. While the economic growth dimension of rural development has received much attention, little is known about the structural conditions in the social organization or the kinds of intervention strategies which will produce social well-being. It appears that once the sustenance threshold is approached, increments of liberation per unit of economic technical growth diminish sharply. Social theory literature suggests the means for ordering the rural development model a la interactionist theories based in existential philosophy which parallel rural development intervention practices by treating both ends and means. Economic development must be viewed as no more than a means, for the ends of rural development should be human and ecological and have to do less with development than with being. Therefore, rural development should inlclude a systematic examination of social theory, and the following, among other, hypotheses should be tested: relationships expressing cooperative linkages are more supportive of social well-being than those expressing opposition or isolation; comprehensiveness of linkages is more facilitative of social well-being than is fragmentation; conscious commitment to comprehensiveness/cooperativeness is most facilitative of social well-being. (JC)

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SOCIAL WELL-BEING AND RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: ISSUES IN POLICY AND THEORY*

Kenneth P. Wilkinson
(January 1974)

Recent discussions of rural development in rural sociology (especially Copp, 1972; and Ford, 1973) give further support to the historical characterization of the field (see Nelson, 1969; Anderson, 1959; and Kaufman, 1963) as one in which the practical and the theoretical are intertwined. Rural development, as a concern of citizens, politicians and administrators, particularly within the U. S. Land-Grant System, represents a continuing challenge to social scientists who would attempt to articulate theory and method with policy and practice. The challenge is to go beyond merely avoiding the sacrifice of scientific standards in policy research, and beyond merely applying scientific findings. Rural development is one of those areas in which policy issues and issues in social theory converge. Science and society will be served through a rigorous examination of the points of the convergence.

The aim of this paper is to conceptualize and give minimal propositional structure to a set of ideas now being discussed widely in the Land-Grant system under the label "rural development." I will review the goals of rural development stated and implied in the political and administrative literature and attempt to formulate from these a definition of social well-being, using as frame of reference the assumptions of a distinctive

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conceptual approach in sociological social psychology. Then I will draw upon an area of substantive research in sociology of clear relevance to rural development, namely the area of community analysis, for issues and propositions which might be used to guide rural development research and action in conjunction with the social well-being concept.

Social Well-Being

Rural Development Goals

The in-house literature[1] of the Land-Grant system provides, at best, only a general indication of social goals to be pursued through a rural development activity; and the rural development legislation, as a product of a dynamic political process, provides even less help toward clarifying objectives. These sources, of course, are administrative and political, not scholarly, and should thus be examined not for clear definitions of projected end states of rural society but rather for fragmentary cues to underlying value-images of improved social well-being. Construction of a conceptual model of social well-being from these cues is an academic task involving, as it were, the sorting and sifting of various policy statements and a substantial filling-in of gaps.

My reading of this literature yields an image of improved social well-being for rural areas with three major dimensions, each of which must be considered in a comprehensive analytical or action framework. These include an economic-technical growth dimension, a human-interpersonal growth dimension and an environmental-quality protection dimension. The first of these is discussed in detail in the official and planning literature of rural development.

The others are only mentioned in this literature, but are logically implied as essential features of a comprehensive rural development effort.

The economic-technical growth dimension has four more or less discrete sub-dimensions. The first has to do with productivity, efficiency, employment, and income--basic sustenance requirements of social life. This is stated generally as the prime, manifest concern of economic development programs, with creation and diffusion of technology sometimes listed as supportive processes. The quality and availability of services, facilities and amenities delimit a second area of concern of economic-technical growth. Differentiation of central place functions, for example, and increased specialization of service agencies are essentially dependent upon economic development and upon the application of improved technology. A third concern in this category has to do with social and cultural structures, e.g., organizations, institutions, and value patterns, which facilitate, or impede economic growth and technical differentiation of services. Concern is sometimes expressed for a social technology of development. The fourth of the economic-technical growth sub-dimensions relates to human resources, that is to personnel numbers, qualifications, achievement needs, work attitudes and the like. The primary concern here is with characteristics of people which have relevance, as inputs, to the process of economic-technical growth.

The human-interpersonal growth dimension has less to do with people as inputs than with people as ends. Concern is directly with the needs and potentials of people and thus with generating social mechanisms for maximizing human welfare. Chief among these, though rarely indicated in the rural development literature, is the quality of interpersonal relations such as is

manifested in expressions of trust, love and respect among neighbors and associates. Communication is a focus of this dimension; the pervasiveness, openess, and effectiveness of interpersonal transactions are assumed to reflect characteristics of communication systems. The human-interpersonal growth dimension also is concerned with equity and its corollaries; namely justice, legitimacy of institutional structures and functioning, participation, and indigenous control. It relates also to collective action potentials, such as have been assumed to underlie community as a structural form.

The environmental-quality dimension refers to the largely implicit objective of attempting through deliberate action to maintain the natural ecological balance and integrity of the biosphere while maximizing economic-technical and human-interpersonal growth. This has been treated as a supplemental, limiting dimension of rural development, as an object of "trade-offs." Models of rural development which "optimize" rather than "maximize" human goal attainment have been sought. A need to substitute balance for growth has been suggested, though not operationalized in rural development programs.

While the cues in the rural development literature are adequate to allow for the construction of such a three dimensional image, the model produced is unsatisfactory for scientific purposes for at least two reasons: 1) It is value biased; and 2) It is conceptually disordered. Distinctively Western, WASP, fundamentalistic, agrarian, middle-class, establishment values comprise the philosophic base from which rural development as a political phenomenon of the 1970's has emerged.[2] Human-interpersonal growth and protection of environmental quality have been mentioned, but not taken seriously.

When they are taken seriously, even a brief analysis of the context within which they have been presented reveals these to be in critical ways inimical to the one dimension, economic-technical growth, which has been taken seriously (see Hightower 1973:51-57) in the rural development literature. Rural development shorn of its co-optive supplements, is revealed in the political-administrative sphere to be primarily a code word for economic development, the value basis of which has been debated widely.

The conceptual disorderliness of the model is partly a result of such grafting. Several levels of analysis and abstraction are indicated. Relationships among the dimensions are only vaguely suggested. There is no suggestion as to principles by which changes might be expected to occur. Theory is lacking. The model is little more than a list.

Social Theory and Social Well-Being

The literature of social theory offers suggestions for ordering the rural development model. The quest for a concept of improved social existence has been a persistent, though frequently disavowed, aspect of the development of general sociological theories of social change. While frequently arguing that social perfection is an unattainable state, virtually all sociological theories of social change (see Applebaum, 1970; Hobbs, 1971) have posited at least an implicit vision of how things might be, as it were, better. These visions of the better have differed (see the discussion in Wilkinson, 1973b) greatly from one another. Theoretical positions which emphasize the orderly, predictable aspects of social life, operating from a teleological base tend to view social change as a sequence of steps toward an ever more adequate

alignment of society with inherent principles of order which presumably, hold throughout the universe. Theoretical positions which emphasize the emergent, novel aspects of social life derive from existential philosophy (see Sarte, 1957), which views reality as in continuous flux, and tend to see social change as resulting from the unpredictable interplay of many forces, some of which relate to the intentions of actors. Between these abstract extremes may be located the major historical and contemporary schools of sociological theory, each with its distinctive modification of the teleological-existential postulate of social well-being and of the processes which produce or restrict it.

It is from an existential base that theories supporting a practice of social intervention must proceed. Functional theories, on the other hand, which carry the teleological assumption, can indeed be useful for conceptualization of the social role (i.e. function) of the intervention process and can even provide a framework for the evaluation of social actions and policies. The functional framework, however, is based ultimately upon an assumption that over the long run the best will out anyway and that for now the best is what is. Intervention practice, of which I take rural development to be a case, is concerned not only with the evaluation of means, but also with the selection among alternative ends. Existentially based theories, such as interactionist theory treat the selection of ends as problematic and are thus more appropriate guides for intervention policy.

Interactionist theories, based in existential philosophy, can be said to have developed in two main, opposing lines, one of which is conflict theory (Dahrendorf, 1964; Coser, 1956) and the other, humanistic (Lee, 1973; Lamont, 1965) theory. The idea of an emergent reality is common to these.

They differ in assumptions (see Boulding, 1970:55-74) about the inherent quality of interpersonal response. Conflict theory sees men as inherently opposed to one another; humanistic theory sees men as naturally disposed to cooperative relations. The goal of intervention from a conflict-theory perspective is to manage conflict in such a way as to optimize benefits of the actors. The goal of intervention from a humanistic perspective is to resolve conflict and thus to minimize blockages to man's inherent capacity for relating cooperatively to others.

The Humanistic Concept of Well-Being

The humanistic perspective in sociology as in psychology, begins with an assumption of the essential unity of all reality. Thus a concept of social well-being from this perspective must be related conceptually to a concept of individual well-being on the one hand and one of universal, ecological well-being on the other. These may be seen as three levels of a singular reality. The idea that there is a fundamental disparity among their requirements for well-being is counter to the initial assumption of the approach. The search for a model of well-being thus is a search for general principles (cf. Buckley, 1967) of well-being which hold at all levels of analysis.

The idea that such principles exist, which is a basic assumption of humanistic theory, does not entail a necessary commitment to a teleological theory of change. It says nothing about change, referring instead to three ways of looking at a single reality and of ascribing to this reality the terms individual, social organization or biological ecology at the different levels. While change in one is axiomatically equivalent to change in the others

there is no stipulation, as in the teleological assumption, of an inherent direction of change. Humanistic theory, like conflict theory, holds that reality, at whatever level it is viewed, is dynamic and basically unpredictable, despite the unitary character of its empirical existience.

Neither of the phenomena referred to as individual, social organization and biological ecology have discrete empirical referents. One of these cannot be located empirically apart from the empirical existence of the others. The assumption that they could was the great fallacy (see Alihan, 1938) of classical humanecology. These are alternate terms for the same configuration of living matter and motion, epistemologically selected and organized in different ways, literally for purposes of discussion. Likewise, at a given level there is no empirical basis for treating individuals as though they were discrete entities. The boundaries even in the physical sense are only approximate, and in the social psychological sense they have ideational substance.

Individual well-being. A concept of social well-being must rest in large part upon assumptions about the nature and well-being of the individual. While present space would not contain a thorough examination of psychological assumptions a general approach can be indicated. Drawing upon work in social psychiatry and sociological social psychology it is possible to articulate a concept of mental health in sociological terms consistent with the humanistic assumptions posited above. Such a concept can be sketched briefly here as background for the social well-being concept. An initial distinction is made for this purpose between two levels of the individual: the ontological and the phenomenological, the real being and the being as experienced.

This is the familiar distinction between things as they are and things as they are thought to be;but when the "things" referred to are personal properties of the thinker, the selectivity of the phenomenological (i.e. mental) level becomes crucial. The ontological level encompasses everything, including mental images, about the individual. The criteria of selectivity of the phenomenological self, whatever those criteria may be, no doubt yield a range of degrees of importance of the various properties selected. Allport (1955) has referred to the most subjectively important properties of one's phenomenological being as the propriate properties and to the configuration of these as the proprium or self, with the latter used in a dynamic sense to signify a "becoming" rather than a fixed entity. Self can be examined at several levels. The existential self is the individual's most basic, propriate experience of his ontological being. The images he attempts to give to others, either through direct statement or through attempts to control images "given off" (Goffman, 1959:4) make up the projected self. The social self is the individual's idea of the images held of him by others. While each of these has ontological status and while projected and social selve may be experienced existentially, it is useful to draw the general distinctions for analysis.

The crux of the matter of individual well-being, from this perspective, is the relationship between the existential self and the projected self. Herein lies the problem of masking or image management. In some formulations (e.g. Tiryakian, 1968:77) this has been treated as the problem of authenticity the individual presents himself as something he is not. Careful analysis will show that the authenticity problem is much broader than this. One may

attempt to project to others his best knowledge of himself and still be inauthentic if his best knowledge of himself is in error. To "Know Thyself" is a futile undertaking in the limiting case. But to broaden and increase the accuracy of one's knowledge of one's being is possible. One major hypothesis generated by self theory is that the scope and accuracy of the existential self are affected by the extent of honest disclosure (Jourard, 1964:176-187) of the existential self to others. This is to say that one gets to know himself better through revealing what he knows of himself to others and that one is more prone to reveal himself to another to the extent that he reveals himself to himself.

The reasoning for this circular hypothesis points to the importance of the social self, and may be summarized as follows: An honest attempt to disclose one's self to another demands introspection and role-taking, both of which call aspects of being into consciousness. Disclosure to another, particularly to another who is viewed as acceptant, also serves a "cathetic" function which may be necessary to allow one to transcend low order (tension-reduction) motives. Further, the search for self knowledge tends to make one more open to others. This search is always carried on with reference to oneself as a "being-with-others." The ontological structure of being is an interactional field (see Tiryakian, 1968:76); it is not merely the behavioral existence of the individual. This is certainly implied in Mead's treatment (1934:142,178,186) of the social self as something already existing in the social process. The existential self is critically influenced by what I think others know of me (the social self) and by what I may tell, or keep from,

others about me (the projected self). Second, the search for knowledge of one's self requires and facilitates the development of an acceptant stance vis a vis one's ontological being. One can know only that which one will accept as real, and viewing it as real means accepting it. To accept one's being, or some aspect of being, is to render it non-threatening in the repressive sense, though it may retain its propriate significance. Given the interactional structure of ontological existence, acceptance of one's being means acceptance of the other's being as well. The other is then less threatening, and can be trusted with information about one's self, unless of course the specific other in question gives evidence of being untrustworthy, i.e. of being less than honest in his own attempt to be open.

The degree of phenomenological or mental health in this context can be defined by the degree to which the various levels of an individual's existence are in agreement. Health would be much easier to attain were this statement to refer only to agreement among one's selves. We could then say that one who projects to others his best knowledge of himself and senses that others view him pretty much as he views and projects himself would be quite healthy even if his view of himself were in fundamental error. But that would be inconsistent with the central hypothesis of self theory. There would be, according to this hypothesis, a need for the openly projecting individual to align his phenomenological self with the facts of his ontological existence.

The central component of mental health is the acceptant attitude toward self and other, which when generalized leads to an acceptant view of the ontological structure of man, which is to say the ontological structure of self-in-society. Out of this grows self-respect and respect (see Cooley, 1902:198-222; and Fromm, 1947:107) for others. Weakness of it gives rise to

insecurity and mistrust of self; manipulativeness, authoritarianism,, mistrust of others; and anxiety in relationships with others. Self-respect and respect for others, at least for the generalized other, are synonumous. This is a restatement of the proposition that recognition of reality means acceptance of that reality. A task for sociology is to identify social conditions which facilitate such acceptance and account for its variations in occurrence among individuals and among collectivities.

Relationships of intimacy, such as Cooley described in the primary group (1909:26-31) presumably contribute to the development of the acceptant stance in the person. Clearly such a stance could not emerge were one entirely, or even largely engaged in formalized or secondary relationships. But a caution, stated most clearly in the work of Erich Fromm (especially 1956) is needed in dealing with such primary relationships. The primary relationship, or at least the form of it often found in the family by sociologists, can be source of bondage--symbiotic dependencies restrict individuation and self-actualization while providing the individual with a necessary sustenance and security base from which to develop. The process of development of a mature social personality (see Fromm, 1956:37-38) by the individual can be seen to involve movement through several stages with reference to one's relationships with others. These include:

1) Socialization: Development of primary ties; development of self consciousness; internalization of social roles and values; conditioning.

2) Dramaturgy: Playing of social roles in generally acceptable manner; playing (see Berne, 1964) of "games image management; private, almost unconscious rebellion or dissociation, but with public facility at performing required tasks and "giving off" (Goffman, 1959) favorable impressions; manipulative, generally inauthentic comportment; other directedness; "me" as paramount concern.

3) Actualization: Increasing ability (see Maslow, 1954) to endure loss of external validation through assertion of self; decline of primary bonds in favor of individuation but with continuing need for union with others--this becoming less based on fundamental security needs than on the need to "be"; corresponding development of acceptant stance vis a vis man reflected in feelings and behavior re self and others; major emphasis on "I".

4) Love: Reunion with others, but now with separate integrities of self and other maintained; an unpossessive caring and preference based on need to be in keeping with ontological ground of self-in-society rather than on security needs; convergence of self and society, of "I" and "me".

Social conditions can restrict movement through these stages. The interpersonal structure of self is vulnerable at each step to undermining and perversion. Unmet lower-order needs (e.g. the sustenance needs) may occupy one's energies and pre-empt consciousness such that self is not experienced. Or self might be experienced in a grossly inaccurate way. Lack of respect of self and other can be based on pre-emptive attention being given to lower order needs and disrespect can result from inaccurate perception. Either tends to alienate man from the interpersonal bases of his real social existence and to produce ontological insecurity (Laing, 1960:40-44; and Slater, 1970) and interpersonal hostility. These are perversions of natural human tendencies toward interpersonal warmth, cooperativness and respect.

Social requirements for individual well-being. Social conditions for individual well-being are those which minimize interference with the natural processes of individual and interindividual consciousness. There are two basic requirements: (1) Sustenance organization must be adequate to meet primary needs and thus free attention from the struggle for survival; and (2) Beyond the sustenance threshold, social arrangements must minimize interference with accurate personal and interpersonal response.

These requirements relate, in essence, to the economic-technical growth dimension and the human-interpersonal growth dimension of rural development discussed above. Arrangements for meeting primary sustenance needs must first generate adequate caloric inputs to assure homeostatic functioning of physiologic systems in relation to the environment. Then arrangements must be made to minimize the proportion of human caloric output which must be allocated to the struggle for sustance. This is attempted through, for example, the development of physical technology and through such social adjustments as division of labor. Human energy and attention are thus liberated from the pre-emptive demands of the sustenance quest and made available for other use. The first diversion of energy perhaps is into further development of technology and other means to assure survival in the future. Services are also sought, and provided. Infrastructure is created for the continued development of sustenance and related resources. Human resources are prepared through socialization to maintain and improve the system. Energy flows (see Odom, 1970) are thus routinized.

A fundamental issue for both social policy and social theory arises when the sustenance threshold (defined broadly to include service differentiation and other aspects of economic-technical growth) is approached. Beyond this threshold increments of liberation and thus of human well-being, per unit of economic-technical growth appear to diminish sharply. Obsessive hoarding, proliferation of services and amenities, and the quest for luxuries and symbols of superiority ensue. Physical survival is threatened. The natural quality of interpersonal response is altered. Human energy is captured rather than freed as individuals must struggle to protect and expand their already bloated holdings.

Social well-being requires, thus, a post-sustenance consciousness (cf. Toffler, 1970:383-417) which frees man from the obsession with economic-technical growth and facilitiates the actualization of his human interpersonal potentials. The general characteristics of such a post-sustenance consciousness can be deduced logically from the assumptions of humanistic theory. They include respect, openness, acceptance, and other qualities of the communal relationship. Likewise some of the proximate social conditions for the emergence of such consciousness can be deduced from the theory. These include conditions of distrubutive justice, normative tolerance, efficiency in communication systems, and the like. Empirical support for the proposition that such conditions relate to warmth in interpersonal relations (e.g. in Cartwright and Zander, 1968) is available. Little is known, however, about structural conditions in social organization which produce these proximate conditions or, of critical importance, of the kinds of intervention strategies likely to produce changes along these lines. This is in contrast to the situation concerning the economic-technical growth dimension, which has been the subject of much research, theory and policy action.

Ecological conditions for social well-being. Ecological well-being defines as it were, the other side of the social well-being concept. Rationale for evaluating institutional and organizational arrangements must include ecological as well as individual-centered criteria. Terms such as "natural resource," "trade-off", and even "environment", which social scientists have used to describe man-nonman relationships, must be replaced with terms which point less to the separateness, more to the unity of these elements. General systems theory and other configurational approaches provide, in the abstract,

a framework for examining the interfaces among social, personal and biological aspects of reality. But that, in my view, is not enough. The well-being concept proposed here is one which views man, nature and society, not as discrete systems in interaction--and thus capable of trade-offs to achieve sub-optimization or balance--but rather as terms for the same singular reality. The individual is an ecological phenomenon and is a social phenomenon, as surely as it is an individual. It is these things simultaneously.

It follows that the social conditions which provide for human sustenance and human expression must also provide for maintenance of the biosphere. This is a central ecological postulate of a naturalistic approach. It rests on the assumption that man, liberated from the sustenance preoccupation which occurs when he is either too far above or too far below the sustenance threshold will act in ways which are consistent with natural requirements for continued functioning of the biosphere. This parallels the assumption that man will act in accordance with his fundamental humanness to the extent he is allowed to do so by social conditions.

Ecological maintenance and human actualization are values which historically have been pursued only by a privileged elite. They cannot, however, be dismissed as invalid or accepted simply on relativistic grounds. The fact is that a very small proportion of the population of the earth, currently or historically, has been assured of meeting its sustenance needs. The emergence of a sizable liberated population, e.g. in the urban, Western middle class, is such a recent phenomenon that transition to a post-sustenance consciousness, with attendant commitments to individual actualization and ecological maintenance has not occurred on a mass scale. The stage is still being set for a critical empirical test of the hypothesis that social well-being can be attained with ecological integrity.

The aim of development, rural and urban, from this perspective, is to create and maintain social conditions which give maximum support for and cause minimum interference with natural functioning of individual-interindividual-ecological processes. Economic development is an essential aspect of development especially in rural areas and in the Third World, but must be recognized as no more than a means. The ends should be human and ecological and have to do, in fact, less with development than with being.

To illustrate how such theory might be used to guide rural development research, I turn to a consideration of one of the substantive areas of sociological inquiry in which the issues of concern to the theory and to the political-administrative process of rural development are salient.

The Community and Social Well-Being

The local society, or community, is of distinctive, though not exclusive, relevance to the study of improved social well-being and to attempts to encourage rural development. Indeed for many purposes the national or state levels are more appropriate for policy considerations. The distinctiveness of the local society as a factor in social well-being is borne principally by two of its (see Konig, 1968:4-5) characteristics: (1) It is the setting for the individual's empirical contact with society; and (2) It is global, in an institutional sense. National and state policies are experienced and implemented within a local setting; and, despite variations among local societies, each by definition, contains the total "table of structure" of the larger society. Thus the local society is the primary realm, beyond the family, of the social experience of the individual. Also, in the community development literature there is the frequent assertion, though largely untested, that local action

conditions of life of local residents. As a spatial concept, the local society is directly indicated in any notion of rural development. Finally the phenomenon of community, conceived broadly, can be posited on logical grounds as a social condition for well-being, as defined above. Community is thus both a means and an end of purposive attempts to increase social well-being.

Among theoretical concerns of the literature on the community of direct relevance to the study of social well-being are those having to do with (1) the effects of changes in geographic base upon community functioning and identity, (2) the interactional consequences of local population size, and (3) the implications of alternative modes of interrelation of local interest fields. These are discussed briefly below as they reveal the interplay of structural and social psychological forces in community change and as they might affect social well-being.

The Changing Geographic Base

The spatial element is crucial in community definition. Human ecology, which has produced the largest and perhaps the most systematic body of community research (see especially Hawley, 1950; and 1971), focuses upon social and biological relationships within a delimited geographic area. Institutional and systemic approaches often define community, with Parsons (1960:250), as ". . . that aspect of the structure of social systems which is referable to the territorial location of persons . . . and their activities." Interactional and social psychological approaches focus upon those aspects of local interaction which relate to common life (see Kaufman, 1959; Sutton and Kolaja, 1960 and MacIver, 1931:24) in a locality.

The spatial element can change; and that apparently is what is happening in modern and modernizing societies, especially in the rural areas. Much rural development literature is concerned with the apparent "decline", as it is termed, in many smaller communities seen most clearly in decreased size of population but also in other characteristics (Wilkinson, 1973a) such as community services, viability of local decision-making structures and community involvement and identity. While there is evidence that smaller places persist (see Fuguitt, 1971) despite apparent trends of steady decline, there is also evidence to support the assertion by Simon and Gagnon (1969:510) that:

> the land and economy of the United States will not support as many small towns as they did before. It is very difficult not to see that future as a long drawn out struggle for community survival, lasting for half a century, in which some battles may be won but the war will be lost. A future in which most such towns will become isolated or decayed, in which the local amenities must deteriorate, and in which there will finally be left only the aged, the inept, the very young—and the local power elite.

In terms of institutional patterns and organizational structures, the process of concern is that which in the positive, developmental sense is referred to as structural differentiation; the opposite must be termed de-differentiation or simply decreased differentiation. The latter is a relative concept. It is generally well established that the basic direction of change in human social organization (see Young and Young, 1963) has been toward increased differentiation. Thus, decreased differentiation has meaning only

with reference to a given geographic area. The larger area can be assumed to be undergoing increased differentiation while a local area within it is undergoing decreased differentiation. What is happening in such a case is that the geographic base of the social structure of the community is being enlarged. This is known (see Kasarda,1972) as the phenomenon of ecological expansion. Functions and services formerly provided in the smaller locale are being offered on a larger regional basis. The functions and services are still being provided; indeed they are provided on a more differentiated and specialized basis. Institutional patterns continue to exist but in an expanded setting. What "declines" in such a circumstance is the level of services and the volume of interaction related uniquely to the immediate place.

Several rural case studies, some dealing manifestly with the assumed process of "decline", illustrate this process of expansion. The process is described in one study (Adams, 1969:481) as follows:

> First to leave are the specialized professionals, especially dentists, then doctors and lawyers. They move to larger places or centralized clinics on the correct assumption that a regional clientele will seek them out. Second, large dry goods establishments close down, leaving the sale of new cars to garages, with the cars on order rather than in stock, and the sale of appliances to the general dry goods or hardware store. People will travel several miles to buy items such as cars, refrigerators, and couches and the regional competition drives out the small town outlet early. Simultaneously, specialized services such as beauty parlors, laundries, paint stores, and TV repair shops fold. Third, duplicate businesses are driven out by competition

> for a contracting clientele. If there are two hardware stores one may go under; if there are three groceries, one or two may close. The same is true for filling stations, feed stores, and other retail establishments.

Thus there is an increase in the level of differentiation in social organization of the regional community and of the larger society but a decrease in the level of differentiation, particularly as regards public services, in the restricted, original community area.

Such changes reflect the basic ecological process of expansion which, along with related concepts of agglomeration; economies of scale, and rational efficiency, presumably underlies the pervasive structural tendency toward increased differentiation. It might be assumed that this process produces a different but more adaptive mode of economic and social organization using improved technology. Aggregate social welfare would be served by such changes. This interpretation is questioned, however, by at least wo propositions. One is that severe social and psychological stresses of apparently long-range rather than transitory character tend to prevail in areas in which these changes are occurring (see Cottrell, 1951; Vidich and Bensman, 1958:106, 299; and Adams, 1969:483). The other is that the process can be arrested through purposive collective action (see Walker, 1955; and Kaufman, 1970) under certain conditions with little apparent loss in social welfare.[3] It would appear that, even given an underlying ecological tendency toward regional agglomeration of community functions and structures, there would be room for intervention through purposive social action.

From the standpoint of the humanistic concept of social well-being, it would appear that policy action is needed to divert the research focus of rural development from the search for strategies to maximize structural differentiation and economic growth to the search for strategies to identify and maintain levels of differentiation needed to support the ends of human actualization. Differentiation and growth, from this perspective, must be viewed as means rather than ends. Considerable growth and differentiation, with attendant expansion and stress in the community field, might still be needed in some rural areas to allow residents to attain the basic sustenance threshold. But continued growth beyond that threshold would result in reduced rather than increased likelihood of human well-being. Existing technology and intelligience should be deployed to help mute the negative consequences of the agglomeration tendency. The goal should be to develop a widely applicable procedure for enabling people to live in community settings of human scale without having to sacrifice the genuine (as distinguished from the superfluous) benefits of economies of scale. Research is critically needed to monitor and evaluate the interactional consequences (see Keyes, 1973) of rural economic development.

Correlates of Size and Density

Whether there could in fact be a distinctive social phenomenon called rural development is ultimately a question of the social correlates of the size/density characteristics of local populations. Despite the theoretical significance accorded such characteristics and the considerable work done on identifying their correlates in small groups and complex organizations there has been little empirical research on the effects of size and density of the

population on the social characteristics of direct concern to theory of community development processes. Rather, there has been a continuing exchange over whether size/density categories, e.g. rural and urban, denote qualitative differences among life styles and culture patterns. The evidence seems to be (see Berelson and Steiner, 1964:606-607; Hamilton, 1972:239-282; Lemon, 1972: 31-32; Glenn and Hyland 1967:77; Willits and Bealer, 1963; Willits, Bealer and Crider, 1973; and Fischer, 1973) that they do, even in "mass society", perhaps owing to demographic limits inherent in certain cultural patterns. But whether differences, such as in fertility, participation in formal voluntary organizations, voting behavior, and expression of moralistic values, influence the quality of local interaction in a theoretically significant way has not been demonstrated. I suspect that they do not, but that there are critical size/density effects which directly limit the forms of this interaction. The form of interaction in which there can be widespread participation without action-blocking fissures is possible only in small places. In larger places, it would appear, for action to be effective authority must be vested in special interest organizations (called CDO's community, i.e. community decision organizations, by Warren, et al., 1969), the interrelations of which would be expected (Aiken and Alford, 1970:662; and Mott, 1970) to influence the overall action characteristics of the community. In large, metropolitan centers the interrelation among community decision organizations (see Warren, 1967) would likely be sporatic and unsystematic (Long, 1958) in the usual case. The only organization able to act regularly in a generalized role, i.e. across interest fields, over time in such centers (see Kaufman, 1962) would be government. Government, being primarily a control and goal attainment mechanism, provides

only minimum integration and coordination of community. Where government is the only provider of these on a continuing basis, the community field as a structural element (Wilkinson, 1970) can be said to be weak to nonexistant. Sub-areas of the local society might have non-government or supra-government structures of integration, but such areas typically lack the global (Konig, 1968:24) institutional characteristics commonly required in community definitions. Thus community in the usual case must be found outside the metropolitan setting, in what is now being called (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative State Research Service, 1970:3) the rural areas. Community is thus primarily a rural phenomenon!

Community, of course, is only one factor in social well-being, and it probably is one of the weaker ones in modern society. But to the extent that it is a factor it is manifested largely in nonmetropolitan localities. Given the requirements of sustenance organization and infrastructure for the emergence of what I am calling community, which parallel and indeed are related to the sustenance requirements for the emergence of self in the person, it is likely that community would also not be found in the smallest places. As an empirical observation, I would say that community in contemporary American is primarily found, if at all, in centers of about 10,000 to about 50,000 population, serving regional populations of no more than about 150,000. These estimates vary somewhat from, but express a general point made by Kaufman (1962). They stand in contrast to the argument (by, e.g., Hansen, 1970; and Berry, 1972) that places under 50,000 have little promise as growth centers. This latter argument is based on the assumption that such places have a restricted "spread effect" or sphere of regional influence. My observation is based on the assumption that comprehensive coordination and communications networks, and common

identity -- important features of a community field--require a limited population size.

Rural development and community development are not synonymous. The former refers to attempts to increase the aggregate welfare of individuals in rural, i.e. nonmetropolitan, areas while the latter, community development, refers to attempts to create (see Wilkinson, 1972; and Cary, 1970) certain structural qualities. Community development might be a means to rural development; but, as Warren (1970) has pointed out, the question of whether the welfare of people is critically affected by the creation of consensus, stability of role structure and collectivity orientation among themselves (as asserted by Olson, 1968) should be a matter for empirical investigation rather than a utopian assumption. The humanistic position provides logical support for such an hypothesis; but this hypothesis can only be entertained in a setting where community is possible. Such settings, in my view, tend to be rural.

Interfield Relationships

The local society as a behavioral, interactional phenomenon (Kaufman, 1959; Wilkinson, 1970) consists of a configuration of overlapping, intersecting fields of interest and activity. Mechanisms, i.e. behaviors and sentiments, which link these fields with one another and with fields which extend beyond the locality (cf. Warren, 1972; Ch. 9) are the key elements for understanding whatever distinctiveness attaches to the local society as a unit. Local societies can be typed according to the extent, quality and other characteristics of these interfield relationships.

In the literature on community, at least four general modes or styles of interfield relationships can be identified. One is what Norton Long (1958) has described as an "ecology of games." The "real estate game," the "local government game," the "health services game," and others operate more or less independently in the local society. Patterns of coexistence and accommodation are worked out on a symbiotic basis but with little or no interpenetration among the "games". Decision organizations within each field seek autonomy so as to maximize organizational goal attainment. A second type of interfield relationship is characterized by dialectical interchange among units in competition for scarce resources and commitments. Bates and Bacon (1972) for example, have identified types of interstitial structures which facilitate exchange accommodations and thus restrain the tendency for conflicting goals and needs to result in public controversy or even violent confrontation. A third type of interfield relationship is one based on functional interdependence, as in the division of labor, in which the interfield exchanges express cooperative rather than competitive goals and needs. In community action studies, for example, functional interdependencies have been noted between development projects concerning manpower training and industrial growth. A fourth type is one which fields are linked through a sense of communal identity (see Kantor, 1968) prevailing among actors in the various fields. Cultural, normative, communicative, functional (see Landecker, 1951) and other forces produce a sense of shared concern and identity. Local actors identify various action problems as parts of a collective concern. Community action is thus generalized because of the shared sentiment. These four types of interfield relationship are, of course, monothetic. Empirical tendencies suggested by

each might be found in combination in any given community. In the abstract, they indicate dominant modes of organization which can be evaluated logically in terms of their likely consequences for social well-being.

On the basis of the social well-being concepts and propositions discussed above, I would suggest three general hypotheses concerning these modes of interfield relationship in the local society. The first is what might be termed the synergistic hypothesis. This is the proposition that comprehensiveness of linkages is more facilitative of social well-being, broadly defined, than is fragmentation. The basic idea is that optimum functioning of the interfiled network is facilitated by the flow of information (cf. Eberts, 1972; and Nix, 1969) and other resources among fields. This is to say that modes of interfield linkage based on dialectical exchange, functional interdependence and communal identity would be more facilitative of social well-being than would the interfield relationship of autonomy (cf. Aiken and Alford, 1970).

The second proposition relating to social well-being and interfield relationships is what might be called the consensual hypothesis. This is the proposition that relationships expressing cooperative linkages are more supportive of social well-being than are those expressing either opposition or isolation. The logical tie to the concept of social well-being is in the assumption that active, cooperative linkages are more fundamental in human existence than are states of withdrawal and opposition. The latter, in fact, are viewed as perversions. Among the types indicated above, the dialectical and autonomous forms would reflect opposition and isolation. Interfield linkages based on functional interdependence or on communal identity would be expected to be more facilitative of social well-being than would those described as dialectical or autonomous.

The third proposition might be termed the volitional hypothesis. This is the proposition that interfield linkages based on a conscious commitment to comprehensiveness and cooperativeness is more facilitative of social well-being than are other interfield relations. This hypothesis is based on the idea (see Wilkinson, 1972:47-48) that psychological involvement in the process of interfield linkage constitutes an increment of linkage beyond that experienced unconsciously as functional interdependence. This of course is a central notion of the humanistic approach. It postulates that the orientation of the actor has causal force in the behavioral field. Communal identity is viewed as the mode of interfield relationship which is most facilitative of social well-being.

This in the abstract is to say that the types form, hypothetically, an ordinal scale relative to their contributions to social well-being. Evidence relative to these hypotheses, would have important implications for the design and implementation of many types of community-based rural development efforts. A rigorous testing of the hypotheses in comparative community studies is clearly needed. These hypotheses relate directly to recent dialogues in the literature concerning the interrelationship of such concepts as community autonomy, viability, participation; and centralization (e.g. in Aiken and Alford, 1970; Clark, 1968; Aiken, 1970; Warren, 1970; Walton, 1967; and Hillery, 1972:542-543).

CONCLUSION

Rural development, as a political-administrative movement within the Land Grant system, will be more rational in its direction to the extent it can be informed by a systematic process of development and testing of social theory. The alternative is to operate on the basis of implicit, untested notions of the nature of human welfare and of the conditions and policies which affect it. The naturalistic, humanistic concept of social well-being and the propositions in community development theory outlined above represent only one among many approaches which might be followed, and indeed one about which there are many more questions than answers; but it is one which relates directly to rural development issues. The challenge of rural development is to explicate a range of such concepts and models and to engineer critical empirical tests among them.

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FOOTNOTES

[1]A sampler of recent items in this literature would include: President's National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty (1967), Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (1968), National Manpower Conference (1968), U. S. Department of Agriculture (1968), Iowa State University Center for Agricultural and Economic Development (1970), National Goals Research Staff (1970), President's Task Force on Rural Development (1970), U. S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative State Research Service (1970), Agriculture Board (1971), Commission on Population Growth and the American Future (1972), Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, United States Senate (1972), National Public Policy Education Committee (1972), Citizen's Advisory Committee on Environmental Quality, Task Force on Land Use and Urban Growth (1973), Agriculture Board (1973), North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (1973), Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development (1972), Northeast Rural Development Task Force (1973).

[2]At least two competing theories can be advanced about the role of rural sociology in what the politicians are calling rural development. Both assume growth in the level of support provided for rural sociological efforts (see Rural Sociology Panel, 1972) but taking different views as to the nature of the present, they project opposing images of the future.

First is the Grade A (wholesome) Theory (subtitled, "The Millenium Draweth Nigh"): In addition to the increase in rural development funding and in the volume of rhetoric about the "people side" of development,

concern for human outcomes is part of a massive contemporary social movement. Witness Common Cause, Naderism, civil rights, Consciousness III, and encounter trips. Government is responsive to massive social movements. Likewise are land-grant institutions. The pace of change may be slow, but we're dealing with the most conservative structural unit in the Establishment. Rural development was one of the few increases in Hatch funding for any reason in this century; now there is a funded Rural Development Act (P. L. 92-419). National leaders in the land-grant system, who initiate much of the USDA/SAES budget planning are vocally committed to rural development. A Republican administration pushed through the first rural development bill, and asked for even more than was appropriated the first year. The House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Congressman Jamie Whitten (D , Miss.), initiated a special appropriation for the Land Grant Colleges of 1890 in FY 1972. Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D. Minn.) chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee and has held extensive hearings on rural development. The Democratic presidential candidate in 1972 called for establishing a rural development agency comparable to NASA. The Commission on Population and the American Future, the National Goals Research Staff, ESCOP, ECOP, ARPAC and many other groups are calling for rural development. A Rural Development Service has been created in USDA. A rural development coordinator has been appointed in CSRS. Regional rural development centers have been established around the country. Our biggest worry as rural sociologists is to avoid getting swamped with resources, power and praise. We need to buckle down in our work, train students better, not screw up, because the New American Revolution is ours to build! We can change the world!

Brand X Theory (subtitled, "Agents of the Cooptation") takes a different view: USDA and the land grant complex, including the SAES, have been enveloped by the conglomeration of large-scale, megaorganizations which now control agriculture (cf. Hightower, 1973:28-51) and most of the rest of American life, domestically and abroad. Vertically integrated agricultural industries, controlled by giant corporations, with the assistance of government subsides, capitalized as land values, continue to force small operators out of farming and out of rural life. Large-scale organizational structures, being non-human bureaucracies, are eminently rational in their pursuit of interest. Sensing the public's tacit endorsement of the revolt of the radical fringe against dehumanization and bigness, these organizational structures have rationally decided to toss a few crumbs to the needy and downtrodden as tokens of their concern. This is cooptation. It means I require all my salespersons to go through sensitivity training or TA or some such so we can wallop our competition. It means hiring long-haired recruiters for the company, and executives embracing the appearance and even the language of "The Kids." It also means, in the extreme, plastic hippies wearing $300 worth of rags down Wisconsin Avenue--and a chain of franchised communes selling love and self-realization for $200 a month in the West. Thus cues go out from the corporate cyberneticists to their government and university lackeys to toss a few crumbs. And who better to toss them to than "our own people," our safe, house social scientists, our hired hands, kept scholars who have shuffled at the right time in the past and who we just knew would come in handy someday. It won't work anyway, because rural life is inherently

unworkable and social science is inherently impotent. In brief, by the Brand X Theory, rural sociologists are agents not of the New American Revolution but of the Great Cooptation. We're suppose to help pacify the dissidents, to help them Adjust.

[3]Population growth rates analyzed by Fuguitt (1971), for example, indicate that the correlation between size of place and growth was considerably smaller in the 1960's than in previous decades. In the case of the Northeast there is even an indication that this relationship is being reversed, i.e. that smaller places are growing more rapidly than larger places. Given the persistent finding (see Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, 1972:35-36) that more people express preference for living in smaller places than actually live in them, the trends in the Northeast could indicate that once rural development, in the sense of jobs, services, and associational structures has reached a fairly high level, people are able to act upon their stated preferences.